

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 1369**

**“An Act To Restructure the Permitting Process for Wildlife and Exotic
Species in Captivity”**

PRESENTED BY: Senator DAVIS of Piscataquis.

DATE OF HEARING: May 5, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Davis, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Jim Connolly, Resource Management Director at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of **L.D. 1369**.

L.D. 1369 proposes some changes in the permitting process for keeping wildlife and exotic or non-native animals in captivity in Maine. As you have heard from my previous report the current process is complex and time consuming for the staff at IFW who administer the permitting process and for those applying. IFW has several suggestions that may work but we are looking for direction on the details of how best to streamline this permitting process and guidance on what species should and shouldn't be permitted in the State.

The bill proposes to establish a separate application fee for each permit that relates to the importation, possession or exhibition of animals in Maine. The bill also directs the Department to create a network of independent contractors who can do the required facility inspections for any permitted wildlife. This will allow Department personnel to focus their efforts on situations where their skills are needed and not take time away for routine inspections that can be handled in other ways. The Department anticipates that an individual or entity would submit an application and fee for the appropriate permit to possess an animal that is not on the unrestricted list. The request would be processed and approved or denied. If the application is approved a list of approved inspectors would be provided to the applicant. The applicant would then contact a person or firm on that list and schedule an inspection. A copy of the completed inspection form would be submitted to the Department along with the permit fee. Once that is received the permit could then be issued. Timely inspections of all the facilities are an important part of ensuring animals are cared for in a manner consistent with the regulations.

IFW has communicated with DACF regarding this bill and they are concerned with one section that refers to therapy animals. IFW and DACF will be meeting prior to the work session to discuss this and come to an agreement.

The Department is looking to the Legislature for additional guidance on whether or not increased efforts should be made to greatly broaden the list of available species as is suggested in two upcoming pieces of legislation.

We will also be coming forward with an amendment for the work session based on additional feedback we have received since the bill was drafted.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.